

Conservation Security Program

Cropland, Fruits and Vegetables Fact Sheet

Minnesota, 2008



Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

What is the Conservation Security Program (CSP)?



CSP is a unique new program that offers payments for topnotch conservation farmers, including fruit and vegetable growers. Unlike other programs that help producers fix resource problems, CSP rewards those who already act as model conservationists. It also pays qualified producers to do further environmental enhancements, such as additional conservation treatments, evaluation, on-farm demonstrations and more.

CSP is a three-tiered program with different requirements for each tier. All CSP producers, regardless of the tier at which they participate, must ultimately address minimum treatment criteria for soil quality and water quality. Techniques to achieve these soil and water quality criteria will vary depending on your farms slope, climate, soil texture, crops grown and other characteristics. Typically, sound resource management will include activities such as those shown below and will result in fertile soil with valuable organic matter that is protected from erosion. Additionally, pesticides and nutrients will be managed to help keep surface and groundwater clean to protect human and environmental health. For cropland, consider the following checklist.

Do you currently...

- **Rotate your crops, if applicable?**
- **Control erosion or soil loss?**
- **Use buffers to protect water sources?**
- **Test soils and apply fertilizers accordingly?**
- **Keep records of fertilizer and pesticide applications?**
- **If irrigated, schedule applications based on crop needs?**
- **Are you willing to pursue additional conservation enhancements?**

Producers in the Minnesota Watershed selected for 2008 may qualify for CSP if they are addressing natural resource concerns on their cropland by:

- Using a reduced tillage system or mulch that covers the soil surface with crop or other residues.
- Using a conservation crop rotation or cover crops
- Applying fertilizer according to a nutrient management plan.
- Collecting soil test information and keeping records of fertilizer and pesticide applications.
- Controlling soil erosion including drainage ways subject to wash outs after rain storms.